



BULLETIN

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

AGENCIES ANNOUNCE NEW ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM POLICY DESIGNED TO ENHANCE NATIVE AMERICAN PARTICIPATION

A new joint wildlife management policy designed to enhance the role of Native American Tribal governments in the endangered species program was announced today by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The policy seeks to involve Native American Tribal governments throughout the United States in every aspect of the endangered species program from providing information about which species should be protected to more active management of recovering species on or near Tribal lands.

"There are special considerations that we have been mindful of in drafting this new policy," said Acting Fish and Wildlife Service Director John Rogers. "Native Americans in most instances have treaty hunting and fishing rights that must be handled with respect and great care. I believe we have accomplished that and we look forward to continuing our work with Tribal governments throughout the country."

The new joint policy calls for both agencies to:

- o Consult with and use the expertise of Native American Tribal governments when determining which species should be listed, conducting surveys on species populations, and implementing conservation measures.
- o Provide notification to, use the expertise of, and solicit information from Tribal governments when preparing proposed and final rules to list species; consider impacts to reserved hunting and fishing rights and trust lands and exercise special regulatory authority for threatened species when reserved hunting and fishing rights are involved.
- o Allow Tribal governments to participate in all phases of consultation about potential conflicts with endangered or threatened species.
- o Use the expertise of Tribal governments in habitat conservation planning.
- o Include Tribal governments in all public aspects of recovery planning processes and implementation including design and implementation of monitoring programs for delisted species.

Both services already are in partnership with 24 to 26 Tribes and the State of Washington in the "For the Sake of Salmon" effort to halt the declining salmon populations of the Northwest.

In the southern Rocky Mountain area, 12 Tribes, including the Southern Utes (Colorado) and the Jicarilla and Mescalero Apaches (both in New Mexico) are developing fishery management plans for non-native fishes on their reservations.

The Navajo Nation (Arizona, New Mexico) is developing a habitat conservation plan to cover the Mexican spotted owl and several species that are candidates for Endangered Species Act protection.

In the East and Midwest, meetings and training sessions are being sponsored to introduce Tribes to endangered species programs.

Under cooperative agreements, the Nez Perce Tribe (Idaho) is assisting in management of reintroduced wolves and of grizzly bears in the Bitterroot Wilderness.

In Montana, the Blackfeet are assisting in conservation and habitat restoration for the bull trout, a candidate species.

The Lakota Sioux (South Dakota) have requested introduction of black-footed ferrets as part of their prairie management program, and the Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the Navajo Nation and the Hualapai Tribe to restore ferrets to Tribal lands in Arizona.

August 31, 1995

(FWS) Ken Burton 202-208-5713
(NMFS) Gordon Helm 301-713-2370